IN THE CLAIMS

1.   (canceled)

2. (canceled)

3. (previously presented)   The data service apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising a falsification detection circuit for checking, when decrypting the digital data from the encrypted data, the digital data according to the identification code generated by the identification code generation circuit, and for inhibiting the initial digital data from being written back to the storage means when it is found that the digital data has been falsified.

4. (canceled)

5. (currently amended) The data service apparatus according to claim 48, further comprising:
a synthesis circuit for combining the divided files together into one file; and
a separation circuit for separating one file formed from a plurality of files into the plurality of files, wherein
for decryption of the digital data:
the encrypted data stored in the external storage unit are decrypted and combined by the synthesis circuit into an initial one file; and
the file as a result of the synthetic combination is separated by the separation circuit into the plurality of initial digital data and written back to the storage means.

6. (previously presented)   The apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising a communications circuit for

performing information communications with an external certificate server,

wherein restoration of the digital data to be decrypted is done only when the communications circuit has received a permission of restoration from the external certificate circuit.

7. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the data indicative of write or read characteristics of the external storage unit includes data indicative of a cluster size and a track size.

8. (currently amended) A data service apparatus comprising:

storage means for storing digital data;

an aggregation circuit for receiving a number of files of stored digital data from the storage means and for aggregating the received number of files into one aggregate file;

a circuit for obtaining a file size of digital data;

a division circuit for dividing the aggregate file formed by the aggregation circuit into a plurality of files each having the file size obtained by the circuit for obtaining;

an encryption circuit for encrypting the digital data of the plurality of files into encrypted data;

means for supplying the encrypted digital data to a single external storage unit so as to be stored thereat and for receiving stored encrypted digital data therefrom;

a decryption circuit for decrypting encrypted data into its initial digital data;

an extraction circuit to extract attribute data from the number of files of stored digital data from the storage means, and to extract attribute data from a number of files of the digital data obtained from the external storage unit;

a comparison circuit to compare the attribute data extracted from the number of files of stored digital data from the storage means with the attribute data extracted from the number of files of digital data obtained from the external storage unit so as to determine which file or files pertaining to the digital data stored in the external storage unit have been updated since a previous back up operation such that a respective file or files of digital data which have been updated since being previously backed up in the external storage unit are stored in the external storage unit and such that a respective file or files of digital data which have not been updated since being previously backed up in the external storage unit are not stored in the external storage unit; and

an identification code generation circuit for obtaining an identification code unique to the data service apparatus,

in which the file size is obtainable based on data indicative of write or read characteristics of the external storage unit,

in which during a back up operation, the number of files of stored digital data from the storage means are supplied to the aggregation circuit and aggregated thereat into the one aggregate file which is divided into the plurality of files by the division circuit each having the file size which are encrypted by the encryption circuit into the encrypted data and supplied to the single external storage unit so as to be stored thereat such that all files of stored digital data from the storage means which are to be backed up during the back up operation are stored in the single external storage unit,

in which encrypted data, to be decrypted, stored in the external storage unit is extracted, decrypted by the decryption circuit into the initial digital data and written back to the storage means,

in which the encryption circuit is operable to perform encryption by utilizing the identification code generated by the identification code generation circuit, and

in which the decryption circuit is operable to perform decryption by utilizing the identification code generated by the identification code generation circuit.